According to some Rishis, the soul of the sinner goes
to certain regions destined for sinners according to the
degree of his sinfulness ; and when ^after having continually
burnt there with the agonies of remorse for his tortuous'
deeds, his expiation is at an end, then he receives grace.
Thereafter he attains to his appropriate sacred sphere by
dint of such merit as he may have acquired on earth and
enjoys his reward. According to the degree of wisdom,
virtue and holiness, that he may acquire there, he will attain
to higher spheres and travelling on that divine and holy
path, will rise from one to another of countless heavens.
In heaven, there is no animality, no hunger, no thirst; there
is no desire of woman or wealth, neither lust nor anger nor
greed. There is eternal life, eternal youth. By the grace of
God, the soul is infinitely progressive. Overcoming. sin
and sorrc ', this progressive soul must and will progress
onwards and upwards. From one heaven to another, the
tides of wisdom, love, virtue and goodness carry that divine
soul onwards towards everlasting progress and from his
heart, the fount of joy perennially springs. It will not decline

again on earth.

According to some other Rishis, heaven is not absorption into God's Divine Essence to the loss of our individuality which destroys all conditions of our advancement in ethical life and for our communion with Him. In the heaven which he has instituted for us, we behold a whole family of saints and prophets, our glorified dear ones 'who have preceded us, all united with each other and united in Him, enjoying the highest beatitude, where there is no consciousness except the soul's consciousness of Him. This state is not the soul's annihilation in Him but its complete occupation with Him to the exclusion of all other distractions. This condition involves no loss of consciousness but only the soul's expansion into cosmic consciousness, where it is still living but as an all-absorbed entity enjoying His bliss, All who